

National Aeronautics and
Space Administration
Lyndon B. Johnson Space Center
2101 NASA Road 1
Houston, Texas 77058-3696



April 4, 2003

Reply to Attn of:

MA-03-021

TO: NASA Headquarters *Mike*
Attn: M/Deputy Associate Administrator for International Space Station and
Space Shuttle Programs

FROM: MA/Manager, Space Shuttle Program

SUBJECT: The Time is Right

Following our discussion in the fall of 2002 when I alerted you to the possibility that I would step aside as Manager, Space Shuttle Program, in early 2003, I have spent many hours contemplating this important decision. Your counsel and advice have been invaluable. The opportunity to serve as the Manager of the Space Shuttle Program for the past 4 years has been a most rewarding experience. It has been a tremendous honor and a pleasure to serve with such a talented and dedicated team.

After 4 years and much thought and reflection, I have determined that the time is right to move on to other opportunities. I respectfully formally announce my intent to step aside as Manager, Space Shuttle Program, soon after the Columbia Accident Investigation Board findings are complete and after we are well established on a path to return to flight.

I am confident that we will find the root cause of the Columbia accident, fix it, and return to flight soon. Our team is strong and vibrant. Our program and project leaders are creative and dedicated. I believe the future is bright and that our team is poised to perform at even higher levels and with even greater success. The Space Shuttle is an amazing machine with extraordinary capabilities. I am convinced that this visionary transportation system will serve our Nation and international partners well into the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "RD Dittmore", with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Ronald D. Dittmore

cc:

HQ/AA/S. O'Keefe
HQ/M/W. F. Readdy